



Tourism cultural festival induced population pressures and socio-economic implications in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State - Nigeria

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General Note



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ABSTRACT

The Calabar tourism festival attracts a lot of persons such as tourists, investors, business men and women among others, thus exerting population pressures on the socio-economic development of the study area. The population pressures yielded positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, it influenced infrastructural development and triggered income generating businesses and government pro-activeness. On the negative perspective, it instigated inflationary trends as prices of goods and services soared high and brought about depletion of resources and infrastructural facilities as well as increased crime rates and immoral activities. To mitigate the effects of tourism cultural festival induced population pressures, government should increase her budgetary expenditures on tourism development and should provide modern tourism infrastructures that will accommodate increasing populations in subsequent tourism festivals. Besides, social work practice is imperative in terms of awareness creation, sensitization workshops and enlightenment campaigns as a means of cushioning the effects of the population pressures.

Keywords: Tourism, Cultural-festival, Population-pressures, Socio-Economic, Implications

1. INTRODUCTION

The Calabar cultural tourism festival is usually celebrated in Calabar on December of every year as part of Christmas celebration. The Calabar tourism festival was officially established by the Cross River State Law Number 4 of 2006 and was managed by the Cross River State Carnival Commission. The agency however works hand in hand with the Cross River State Tourism Development Commission (CRSTDC) to oversee tourism activities and carnival festivals in the state. The Calabar tourism cultural festival is unique in several aspects. It features both carnival floats and cultural festivals, and each of these events was attended by series of sub events. The tourism cultural festival usually progressed last two to three weeks. The carnival festival for instance, is usually celebrated on 27th and 28th December, each year. The 27th marks the outings of different orchestra, cultural dances and masquerades of different types drawn from all parts of the state. It also features the "children day" wherein children appear in colourful costumes, entertaining audience with all manner of talents and endowments (Esu & Arrey, 2009).

The 28th day being the grand finale, carnival bands, namely: Bayside band, Freedom band, Passion 4 band, Master Blaster band and Seagull's band were showcased. The carnival festival is also marked by the exhibition of different unique attires of varying colours and fashions, by groups of different kinds and parades. During the festival, the streets of Calabar were agog with many people, some as dancers or spectators, while many others are engaged in one form of trade such as hawking, sale of souvenirs.

As rightly observed by Edward & Usang (2013) Calabar festival is usually populated by tourists, investors, business men and women, politicians, coordinators, planners, researchers and consultants and is unique in the sense that the state is abound with traditional and cultural festivals which add colour and ardour to it. For example, traditional dances like the Ekeledi dance, the Obin dance group, Moni-Nkim, Giz-ammakwol, Ekombi, Ikpaticmana, Abakpa and Abang which are found in different parts of the state are conscripted to participate in the Calabar tourism festival. During the cultural troop parade, different cultures in the state also expressed their unique traditional attires. The effect of all these cultural attributes summed up to make the Calabar tourism festival attractive, thereby pulling plenty of people to Calabar during its celebration.

Due to the increasing number of tourists' visitations during the Calabar tourism festival, the Cross River State government further reinforced the positioning of the state as a tourism haven where its various tourism potentials including its diverse cultural heritage are showcased. This made the state a touring destination with strong opportunities for outsiders to experience (Cross River State News Bulletin, 2013). They did this through special tourist phases and unique indigenous cultures through hundreds of annually scheduled festivals and events. All these increased the influx of people into the state on yearly basis (Cross River State News Bulletin, 2013). Tanogbani (2007) assert that the Calabar cultural tourism festival has become a rallying force for different kinds of people as well as the enhancement of a business booming environment, thus creating population pressures in virtually all areas of socio-economic development of the state.

However, Utibe & Effiong (2014) has identified places within the metropolis which are highly visited and experience population pressures. These include: Tinapa resort, Calabar Botanical Garden (Zoo), Old Museum, Marina Resort, Old Calabar Prison Brick wall to mention but a few. Inyang (2005) stated that the Calabar tourism festival has gained a lot of praises and admiration and has the spirit of love, joy, peace and unity coupled with its cultural rejuvenation, attracts people from all works of life. Tourism festivals generally pull a wide range of people or groupings of people who may be tied to the same bond of socio-economic interests (Sherbinin, 2006; Robertson, 2014). In spite of its benefits and positive impacts on the socio-economic development of Cross River State, the Calabar tourism festival induced population pressure has its negative impacts. This is reflected in shortage of hotel accommodations, traffic congestions, and inadequate social amenities, high inflationary trends as prices of goods escalate, increased crime rates and other vices as well as poor security management. It is against this background this study examines how Calabar tourism cultural festival induced population pressures influence socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Research objective

To determine the effect of Calabar tourism induced population pressures on socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Research hypothesis

There is no significant effect of Calabar tourism induced population pressures on socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Literature review

Tourism festivals and population increase

Tourism events and tourism festivals all over the world serve as magnet that attracts people from diverse places. Like all attractive events, tourism festivals help to showcase the culture of a people and reinforce the values that keep the people together as well as the celebration of their identity. It is therefore understandable that tourism festivals would continue to engage the attention of man as long as he breathes (Edward & Lieu, 2012). Agreeing to this view was Ekpo (2009) who in his appreciation of the beauty of tourism festivals, argued that its celebrations in any part of the globe is usually marked by a throng of diverse people from different backgrounds and ethnic nationalities.

Ekpo (2009) stated that people like to visit places where there can have fun and relax, invest and be secured. According to Pauline (2008) tourism festivals gives one the opportunity to behold other people's culture, lifestyles, products, values, beliefs and idiosyncrasies. Not only does a tourism festival stimulate the movement of people, it also influences the conveyance and borrowing of cultures from other people. Supporting this view, Wren (2005) stated that tourism festivals transport enduring lifestyles and cultures of most people to others. It is an event which some people use to express their values, tradition and customs. He further stated that tourism festival is a social event that people are keen to be involved and through which they borrow the culture of other persons. It has also been reported by Oju (2006) that tourism festivals are usually core attraction to tourists and investors. Examples are UgepLeboku new yam festival.

The study of Kozak & Rimmington (2010) revealed that tourism festivals encourage tourists' visitation and foster cross-cultural communication easily. In Nigeria, the government uses tourism carnival as a marketing tool to attract people from all works of life to Abuja (Harry & Odum, 2011). Frank (2009) stated that carnival celebration in Brazil has become a big business, making Brazil, the most visited country in the world. He added that it is during the period of the carnival festival that many tourists got to know how the people of Brazil lived in the ancient days, their craft works and culture.

Tourism festivals and population pressures

The number of people in a particular place relative to the available resources has been a major topic in demographic studies, especially as concerns the welfare and health of the people and society's development (Otieno, 2001). Analysis of the trends and differentials in population sizes suggests the dynamics of livelihood can be determined by the aggregation and dynamics of movement of people to and from that location (Maralani, 2004). In line with this view, Ednal (2011) reiterated that as more people gather in a tourism festival, they are more likely to exert some pressures on the growth process of the host community, as well as the limited resources of that community. In other words, a relatively large population in a particular tourism festival is believed to mount pressure on available scarce resources at the time of its celebration (Okon, 2010). That is why Charles & Abua (2013) recommended that governments and other stakeholders should ensure that social amenities and other resources are made available to support the population that grace tourism festivals.

Anderson, Prentice & Guerin (2007) reported that tourism cultural festivals may enhance tourists' visitations to tourists' sites and famous places such as historical buildings, museum, galleries, theatres, shopping, hotels, castles, sports and old towns and in the process, affect and change their original character and nature. Sofield & Li (2008) reported that the large population that attend the Chinese tourism festivals mount a lot of pressures on existing Chinese products and services to the extent that the Chinese felt challenged and began to plan towards meeting the needs of tourists at all seasons. According to Sofield & Li (2008) the Chinese utilizes their history, culture, traditional festivals, historical events, beautiful scenic heritage, historical sites, architecture, folk arts (music, dancing, and craft work) and cultural heritage to meet the needs of tourists' population at all seasons. Bioudun (2013) affirmed that the attraction of people to tourism festivals influences so many businesses to spring up, thus, reducing the unemployment ratio of the places where tourism festivals are hosted.

Jodice (2006) reported that in most tourism festivals, the influx of participants impede on the cleanliness of the city, facilities (lodging, parking space) and infrastructure (road, street light and medical facilities) as well as affects the attitude of the host community. On his part, Huh (2012) reported that arts, crafts, confectionaries, snacks, and food are usually on high demand during tourism festivals, especially if the population relative to the resources is on the high side. The Virginia Triangle cultural tourism for instance harbors more than 5 million people at a time, with lots of businesses which rarely meets the needs of the population (Huh, 2012). Crompton and Love (2009) reported that the ambience of the Victorian Christmas festival attracts a lot of tourists and investors such that much challenges are experienced, especially as regards shortage of accommodation, comfortable amenities, food and drinks as well as parking spaces.

According to Bessong (2008) countries like Bahamas, Fiji, Maldives, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago where tourism carnival celebrations have become a permanent tradition, attracting very high population is accompanied with corresponding high

government expenditure. Adidi & Attah (2009) investigated the impact of tourists' overall visitations on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. They used a sample of 1650 respondents and ten tourism festivals attributes such as organization, promotion, facilities, shopping, refreshment, food, infrastructure, environmental ambience, safety and security. The findings revealed that these festival attributes were in short supply relative to the huge crowd of people who needed to be served. Evans & Edu (2012) maintained that tourism festivals are usually attended by huge turnout of people who also mount pressure on goods and services as well as the available infrastructural facilities.

The study of Gath (2007) showed that in Thailand the unavailability of adequate resources in terms of housing and infrastructural facilities and accommodation to cater for the large population during her tourism festival poses a great challenge to government. He added that the huge crowd of participants in Thailand's tourism festival exerts enormous pressure on the country's resources, such that in 1998, the country suffered a huge economic deficit and had to draw support from international communities to mitigate the financial, emotional and time constraints associated with the tourism festival. Sherbinin (2006) reported that the success of a tourism festival in any context is dependent on the provision of infrastructure, production and wealth flows as well as the relative strength of the economy to cater for the expected population. Gomes (2014) reported that the effect of a large number of people in a tourism festival can be determined by the level of development, modes of production, access to resources and welfare of the people before and after the celebration.

Effect of population pressures on tourism development

Long & Perday (2000) posited that the number of people who throng tourism festivals not only helps to boost local economy but also stimulate the movement and spread of goods and services to wider destinations. To Ada (2010) tourism festivals attract viable customer groups and elicit high repeat visitations. Prentice & Anderson (2009) opined that the higher the population, the more the local regeneration and prosperity of tourism festivals. A tourism festival with a high population engenders the creation of new employment opportunities, generation of revenue and encourages the development of infrastructure which is visitor friendly and sustainable. Bachleitner & Zins (2012) asserts that tourism festivals with a great turnout of people, especially tourists boost the morale and pride of the host community, showcases ethnic identity, their character and businesses. It is also believed that high population in tourism events exerts some measures of influence on cross-cultural contacts and interactions on wider dimensions (Sdnali & Chazpi, 2007).

Peterpan (2007) posited that whether tourists migrate seasonally or permanently still exert pressure on the economy of the place visited. He argued further that some tourists contribute to or depend upon the resources of the places visited. It further implies that tourism festivals like social events attract networks of people, some of whom exploit the resources of the host community.

Kingstone (2007) asserts that the population in a tourism festival serves as human resources for development and the creation of more labour markets for the host community. It follows too that a large population in tourism festivals will lead to higher standard of living (Mueller, 2004). On their part, Bruce & Loyd (2007) reported that most countries of the world notably Trinidad and Tobago are functionally sustained by the huge population in her tourism festivals. This implies that tourism festival is uniquely important in supporting the economies of host countries.

Pam (2011) also reported that the population size of a tourism festival is very unique and distinct in tourism development, and that no matter the challenges encountered, the host community stands to gain at the long run. Otio & Obimbang (2011) noted that tourism festivals can bring about sustainable development both for the tourists and for the entire members of the host community. In most cases the variety of tourists' support enables the host community and her members to achieve their ends. However, Arumaye (2012) argued that while a large population of tourists in a tourism festival, help to bring about the development or growth of a host community, some may on the other hand be involved in illegal exploitation of resources at the detriment of the host community. The study of Odugba & Gerdy (2005) reported that the interdependence of population size and available resources would jointly determine the development and sustainability of tourism festival in a place.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The setting for the study is Calabar Metropolis; the administrative headquarter of Cross River State. It comprises Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Area. The survey method was adopted in carrying out the study. The population of the study consist of residents, tourists and investors in Calabar Metropolis. Examples of tourism events and sites in the area include Calabar festival (carnival attractions), Calabar zoo, Museum, Marina resort, Tinapa resort, and the Atlantic slave trade departure point.

Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select participants for the study. The target population was stratified into seven, namely: officials of the Calabar Carnival Commission, Cross River Tourism Bureau, Calabar Carnival bands, and members of Calabar cultural festival, tourists, investors and residents in Calabar Metropolis. The purposive sampling method was adopted to

select the sample of respondents. Altogether, a sample of 335 respondents participated in the study. University students were used as research assistants to facilitate the study and were properly instructed. Regression analysis was adopted to analyze the research hypothesis. Sample-by-sample distribution of respondents by their strata and selection is shown on Table 1.

Table 1 Sample-by-sample distribution of respondents by strata and selection

S/n	Strata	Number of respondents	Percentages
1	Calabar residents	60	17.91
2	Tourists	52	15.52
3	Officials of tourism bureau	47	14.03
4	Members of carnival floats	32	9.55
5	Cultural troops	55	16.42
6	Officials of carnival commission	43	12.84
7	Foreign investors	46	13.73
	Total	335	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

3. RESULTS

H₀: There is no significant effect of Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures on socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State

H₁: There is significant effect of Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures on socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State

The independent variable in this study was Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures while the dependent variable was socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was carried out. The results are presented in summary as Table 2

Table 2 Regression of Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures and socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State (n=121)

R	=	.851	Adj. R-Squared	=	.723
R-Squared	=	.724	Std. error	=	2.101

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-value	P-value
Regression	11,506.664	4	2876.666	651.558*	.000
Residual	1,456.95	330	4.415		
Total	11,508,120.95	334			

Variable	Unstandardized coefficient	Standard coefficient	T-value	P-value
	B	Std. error		
Constant	3.451	.455	7.583*	.000
Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures	.782	.031	.851	25.528*

*Significant at .05 level. P < .05

From Table 2, an r – value of .851 was obtained, giving an r – squared value of .724. This means that about 72.4% of the total variation in socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis is accounted for by variation in Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures. The P – value (.000) associated with the computed F – value (651.558) is less than .05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures significantly influences the P – values (.000) associated with the computed t –values 7.583 and 25.528) for the regression constant (3.451) and coefficient (.782) respectively are less than the chosen level of significance (.05). This means that both the constant (3.451) and regression coefficient (.782) contribute significantly to the prediction of socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis using Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of the study revealed that Calabar cultural tourism induced population pressures significantly affects socio-economic development in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria in four different areas such as high government expenditures, inflationary trends, depletion of resources/ infrastructures, and increased crime rates. The finding of this study supports Edward & Usang (2013) who stated that tourist festivals are usually populated by people and somehow deplete the resources of the host community. It equally agrees with Sera, Manyo & Itam (2013) who posited that the Calabar festival induces the migration of people from the rural areas of the state to Calabar Metropolis, thus imparting on the living standard of the people.

It was observed that during the Calabar tourism festival, the population pressure in Calabar Metropolis was generally high, as Calabar, experiences influx of people who come in to grace the festival. This no doubt exerts some pressures on the growth process, especially on resources and infrastructure of the state. The study further agrees with Cain & McNicolli (2009), who in their study of the cultural festivals in Trinidad and Tobago reported that people with intense social and economic interdependences come together and exert a great pressure on the resources of the host country within the period of their stay.

The population pressures during the Calabar cultural tourism festival resulted to inadequate resources to cope with the population. For example, as a result of the population pressures, the transport system became porous, as many people were found stranded on the streets, caused by road blocks, packed cars beside the roads, and traffic hold ups. Consequently, many people walk long distances, and many persons unable to access certain places or even reach their destinations on time. Most visitors were found stranded, not able to secure hotel rooms. Hotels in Calabar became filled and more people found searching for hotel accommodation which they hardly find. Moreover, shortage of accommodations and hotel congestions were also experienced. Basic amenities like water and electricity were in short supply. It was also observed that tourism officials often experienced exhaustion, stress and heavy workload which were related to shortage of material resources, each day of the festival.

Also, inflationary trend became the order of the day, making standard of living expensive and unbearable for the common man as prices of goods and services went high. Hotel accommodations that hitherto cost ₦5000 rose to ₦15000. Transport fares that use to be ₦50 were doubled to ₦100. Prices of goods like confectionaries, snacks, and foods also escalated.

The population pressures further stimulated increased government expenditures. In order to cushion the effect of the population pressure during the Calabar tourism festival, the government opens up new layouts in the city of Calabar. The winding and often narrow roads in the capital city of Calabar were reconstructed, and replaced with dual carriageways. The government also mapped out certain designated areas for certain events such as children cultural displays, cultural dances, and carnival floats among others. The transportation system also changed as motor cyclist was banned from the roads culminating to motor transportation becoming the only means of transportation.

The government expenditures in turn generated employment opportunities, increased output and growth and brought about income generating businesses for both the private and public enterprises, generating surplus revenue for the government and the people. It also stimulated the establishment of big, medium and small scale enterprises like hotels, transportation, accommodation, communication, and other marketing businesses such as shopping facilities, refreshment centers, standard hotels and a business environmental ambience to spring up. A lot of people seize the opportunity to earn a living by engaging themselves in personal selling such as hawking, and sale of fast foods. Also, to meet with the demands of the population, various companies, industries and other business outfits were established and became increasingly competitive, showcasing their products, services and other areas of needs.

The government also provided the Obudu Ranch Resort with modern facilities such as an air strip, a cable car and even reshaped the topography and also made provision for international mountain race tournament as a way of extending tourists accommodation and relaxation. Many tourists and investors who grace the tourism festival stay in Obudu ranch resort due to its serene environment. The slave departure point in Calabar which is a classic example of dark tourism was also built into the tourism cultural festival plan of the Cross River State government.

It was further observed that the population pressures during the Calabar tourism festival gave rise to increased crime rates. Cultism, thuggery, drug abuse, immoral behavior like sexual assault, rape, car snatching, kidnapping, theft and armed robbery became common scenes. It was also observed that population pressures rendered security resources including basic security equipment like security vans, communication gadgets, arms and ammunitions to be inadequate. In some occasions, the population made it difficult for security operative to protect lives and properties effectively. It was further observed that the increasing population rate also carries with it increasing rate of immorality, street children, and drug abuse as well as youth restiveness among others.

5. CONCLUSION

The Calabar tourism festival attracts a lot of persons such as tourists, investors, business men and women, politicians, among others, thus exerting great pressures on the study area. The population pressures yielded positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, it influenced infrastructural development and triggered income generating businesses and government pro-activeness. On the negative perspective, it instigated inflationary trends as prices of goods and services went up and brought about depletion of resources and infrastructural facilities as well as increased crime rates and immoral activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative that government and tourism management agencies acquaint themselves with the dynamics of Calabar cultural festival and the problems faced by people in order to help prevent, solve, and resolve them.

There is the need for proper tourism planning and development as essential tools towards mitigating the effects of population pressures that characterize the Calabar tourism festival. There is also the need to create awareness and sensitize the public and in such a way that tourists, investors and all those involved in Calabar tourism will benefit optimally from it. For these tasks to be carried out effectively adequate resources and logistics should be provided and more training of tourism staff and security personnel should be carried out to enable them address problems that arises from the tourism cultural events.

It is equally recommended that the government of Cross River State should increase her budgetary expenditure on tourism development in subsequent years in order to expand areas of need and that of the population. Government should also provide the necessary incentives, facilities and other enabling environment that will accommodate huge crowd of people in subsequent tourism festivals.

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